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U.K. UNIV GETS UGC NOD TO OPEN ITS GLOBAL CAMPUS IN BENGALURU

University of Birbek in London on Tuesday received a Letter of Intent from the UGC to establish its global campus in Bengaluru, according to officials

GET U.K. DEGREE AT 60% LOWER COST

With the establishment of its Bengaluru campus, Birkbeck will offer Indian students access to globally recognised University of London degrees at 60 per cent lower cost, while maintaining the same academic standards. This initiative directly supports India's goal of increasing its Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education to 50 per cent by 2030, an official said

FLEXIBLE, RESEARCH-LED EDUCATION MODEL

- Founded in 1823, Birkbeck, University of London is globally recognised for its flexible, career-focused, research-led education model
- "The handing over of the Letter of Intent marks a gateway to global learning for Indians. It reflects the confidence that international institutions have in India's higher education," said a top official

2030

IS THE TARGET INDIA HAS SET TO BECOME A HUB FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Don dials Modi. Big deals soon, indicates Gor

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

Donald Trump

US-IRAN TALKS SOON

US President Donald Trump says Iran talks could resume "over the next two days", after the first round in Pakistan last weekend ended without a deal

Crude slipped below $100 a barrel

Israel briefed India on the West Asia situation in a phone call between Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar and S Jaishankar, EAM on Tuesday

IMF reduced its 2026 growth forecast for West Asia, saying Iran, Iraq and Qatar will be hit hard

At least four Iran-linked ships — including two that visited Iranian ports — crossed the Strait Tuesday following the start of a US blockade

EMPHASISING the strategic importance of energy security and global trade routes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump held a phone conversation for 40 minutes on Tuesday focussing on the escalating situation in West Asia and the imperative of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and secure. The call came amid rising global concern over disruptions to maritime energy flows.

This was the first call between the two leaders since the US-Iran ceasefire last week, and their third this year. "Received a call from my friend President Donald Trump. We reviewed... progress achieved in our bilateral cooperation in various sectors. We are committed to further strengthening our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas. We also discussed... West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait open and secure," Modi said.

DAY 46 | WAR WATCH

The Strait remains a critical maritime chokepoint, carrying a significant share of global crude shipments. US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor described the exchange as "a very positive and productive call", signalling fresh momentum in bilateral ties. He also indicated that US sees India as a possible stakeholder in broader diplomatic efforts, adding "it is up to India to join the peace process." The US "welcomes all parties", he said.

Gor also pointed to the possibility of upcoming announcements in economic and energy sectors, saying that "big-ticket deals" between India and the US could be finalised in the coming weeks. He said, "We do have some big-ticket items that will be announced over the next few days or the next few weeks... something very interesting and exciting." According to him, energy cooperation is expected to be a major component of the emerging agreements. He also said that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's upcoming visit to India next month is expected to further consolidate bilateral momentum.

He stressed that reopening secure maritime passage as a priority for US.

For 33% women's quota, 307 LS seats to be added, cap set at 850

Three bills to figure in special session of Parliament, Oppn meet today to chalk out strategy

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

DELIMITATION AS PER LATEST CENSUS

Govt to move delimitation bill 2026, to replace Delimitation Act, 2002

REPRESENTATIONAL PHOTO

PROPOSES A DELIMITATION COMMISSION CHAIRED BY A CURRENT OR EX-SC JUDGE

Delimitation Commission will readjust Lok Sabha and assembly seats and redraw constituencies on the basis of the latest Census figures

Existing allocation of seats is based on 1971 Census; present division of territorial constituencies done on 2001 Census data

SETTING the ball rolling for the implementation of one-third reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, the Centre on Tuesday proposed a significant increase in the Lok Sabha seats from the existing 543 to 850, after a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census.

According to three draft pieces of legislation circulated among Members of Parliament, 815 of the proposed seats in the delimitation exercise will represent states, while 35 will be allocated to Union Territories.

It was also proposed that the one-third quota for women should be implemented after a delimitation following the "latest published census".

Another key provision of the bill says that the seats reserved for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies "shall be allotted by rotation" across constituencies.

The three bills that will be taken up in the three-day sitting of Parliament on April 16 are the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Delimitation Bill, 2026, and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

The draft bill seeks to amend Article 81, which governs the strength of the Lok Sabha. The proposed amendment says the Lok Sabha will have a maximum of 815 members to be chosen from the states. Also, not more than 35 members are to be chosen from the Union Territories in such manner as the Parliament may by law provide.

The current strength of the Lok Sabha, which is 543, is based on the 1971 Census. After that, the delimitation exercise has not been done as the 42nd amendment to the Constitution mandated a freeze in delimitation for 25 years until 2001, which was extended by another 25 years till 2026.

The draft bill also seeks to amend Article 82, removing the constitutional requirement that delimitation must follow the 2026 Census.

While it was widely speculated that the government may propose a 50 per cent increase in seats for all states, the bills do not have a mention of such proportional distribution.

"The Constitution Amendment Bill seeks to revise the constitutional framework relating to delimitation, allocation of seats and the meaning of "population", by providing that readjustment of constituencies and allocation of seats shall be undertaken by the Delimitation Commission based on such census as Parliament may by law determine," it said.

Responding to the proposed bill, the Congress said that when the intent behind a bill is "mischievous" and its content "devious", the extent of damage to parliamentary democracy is enormous.

CPI(M) MP John Brittas said that when concerns were raised about the declining representation of the South, the PM and others claimed there would be a proportional increase in seats for all states equally. "However, the draft bills offer no such guarantee. If delimitation is carried out based on the 2011 Census instead of 1971, seats in the North will surge dramatically, while the representation of South will shrink or stagnate," he said.

The Opposition parties will hold a meeting on Wednesday to chalk out strategies ahead of the session.

BYPOLL FALLOUT

Siddu sacks his political secy Naseer Ahmed

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah has sacked MLC **Naseer Ahmed** as his political secretary. The CM's hands were forced by the party high command in the aftermath of the Davanagere South byelection, in which the Muslim community was apparently upset with the choice of the Congress candidate.

The first victim was Abdul Jabbar who had to step down as president of KPCC Minority Cell. Next in line could be Minister for Housing, Zameer Ahmed Khan.

Siddaramaiah had asked Naseer Ahmed to resign but the latter resisted, and wanted to be a 'victim' to gain sympathies of the Muslim constituency as the one who had pushed for the community's cause to get a candidate of their choice, according to sources. "The CM has taken a decision on Naseer after getting information from various sources on his own and in the interest of the party," Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Tuesday. P4

Nitish Kumar greets Samrat Choudhary during NDA legislature party meet in Patna on Tuesday | PTI

Curtains down on Nitish era, Samrat set to take oath as BJP's 1st CM in Bihar

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

BIHAR Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, 57, is set to take oath as chief minister on Wednesday, marking the end of the Nitish Kumar era and ushering in the first BJP chief minister in the state.

Earlier in the day, Samrat was unanimously elected as the leader of BJP legislature party. Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan chaired the meeting. Later, Samrat was elected leader of the NDA legislature party unopposed. Outgoing chief minister Nitish Kumar announced Samrat's name as the leader. Nitish, who served as Bihar's CM for over two decades, held his last state cabinet meeting in the morning before submitting his resignation letter to the governor. Nitish became a Rajya Sabha MP last week.

After being elected the leader of the NDA legislative party, Samrat met Governor Syed Ata Hasnain, who invited him to form the new government.

According to official sources, the swearing-in ceremony of the new government will be held at Lok Bhavan at 10.55 am on Wednesday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah and other senior leaders are likely to participate in the swearing-in ceremony. P8

No 'resemblance': Man throws son into Krishna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA Rural Police have arrested a man for throwing his six-year-old son into the Krishna river allegedly over taunts by villagers, saying that the child did not resemble him. Superintendent of Police Laxman Nimbargi said the man has confessed to his crime.

The victim has been identified as Siddharth, and his father as Mallikarjun Arakeri, a resident of Nagathan village in Vijayapura district.

Mallikarjun admitted that on March 16, he took Siddharth out on the pretext of getting him admission in a school. Instead, he took the boy to Vadoli in Karad district of Maharashtra and threw him into the Krishna river. He lied to his family that the child had been admitted to a hostel near Sindagi.

Suspicion arose when Siddharth's mother Bhagyashree insisted that he bring the boy home for his birthday on April 1. Mallikarjun allegedly fled the house when the family questioned him about the child's whereabouts.

During the probe, police linked the case to a notice issued by Masur police station in Karad, regarding the body of an unidentified boy found in the river. The body was identified as that of Siddharth.

Sugar in your beer? You may not know

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

DO you know your beer? You may soon not know what makes the fizzy beverage so good. The labelling on beer cans and bottles manufactured and meant for exclusive sale in Karnataka, which give details, including percentage of ingredients used in the popular alcoholic beverage, may soon go.

For 'ease of doing business' and 'simplifying procedures', the State government on April 10 issued a draft notification to amend the Karnataka Excise (Bottling of Liquor) Rules, 1967, under Section 71 of the Karnataka Excise Act, 1965 (Karnataka Act 21, 1966).

Objections, if any, should be filed within 10 days of issue of the notification to the Additional Chief, Finance. The move to amend the bottling of liquor rules proposes to drop Rule 2 of the Karnataka Excise (Brewery) Rules, 1967.

"In clause (f), the 'Note' and entries relating thereto shall be omitted," the draft notification states. This section, along with other things, is on liquor prepared from malt or grain, with sugar addiction capped at 25 per cent by weight (of malt), including ale, porter and stout.

According to informed sources, more than a year ago, the Excise department had directed brewers that "sugar, if used as raw material while brewing beer, should not cross 25 per cent of the total weight of malt, and should be declared along with other ingredients on the label considering health of beer consumers, many of who are also young".

CONTINUED ON: P5

Sugar, if used as raw material while brewing beer, should not cross 25 per cent of the total weight of malt, and had to be declared along with other ingredients on the label

—A source in excise department

Sri Siddaramaiah
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Govt. of Karnataka
Greater Bengaluru Authority
JANASEVAKA
Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
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